

HEAVEN'S

METAL

ALL METAL THE TIME

MORTIFICATION



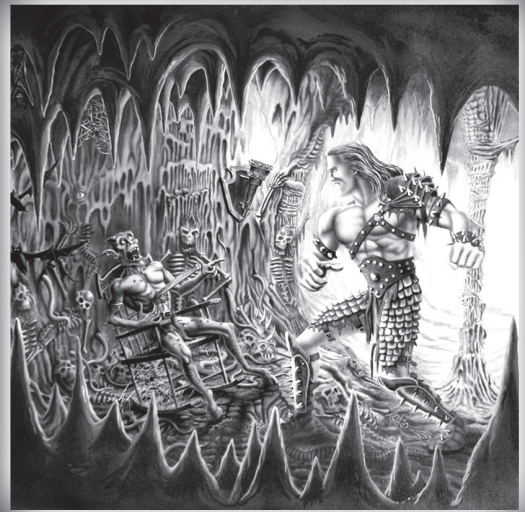
**LANCE KING
SAVIOUR MACHINE
CARL CRANDELL TRIBUTE
TRANS-SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA SAYS**

REVIEWS: FLAGSHIP, MAJESTIC VANGUARD
SYNNOVE, DIVINEFIRE, CORIOLIS, LAWRENCE BISHOP II
ASCENSION THEORY, SCOTT STAPP, FINAL AXE, SAINT, SARDONYX
MISSION OF ONE, DARKFIELD ILLUMINATOR, VISUAL CLIFF, AND MORE...



Feb/Mar 2006 Issue #62 \$2.95

MORTIFICATION



13th Studio Release

Erasing the goblin

First Quarter 2006



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Fog it, light it, or blow it up!

Thus were the words of Paul O'Neill of Trans-Siberian Orchestra in the wonderful interview that took place for this issue. As interviews go, this was one of the "good ones" that you just enjoy being a part of. I'll post the entirety of it online at hmmag.com

Special thanks go out to Kuba, for his fine interview with Eric Clayton of Saviour Machine. We had our own interview planned, but it was snuffed out due to illness and computer problems, and Kuba had this one waiting "in the wings." And thanks to Steven Losey for his help with the back page (Graphic by William Voss).

By the way, to help further this zine, please consider doing business with our advertisers. They help this scene rock.

Grace and Peace,



ELEMENTS

04 METALTRACKS Aletheian, Bride, Stryper

Liberty 'N' Justice, Rob Rock, Drottnar

Virgin Black, Scott Stapp, The Chariot

Holy Soldier, Zao, Flee The Seen, & more.

08 MORTIFICATION Rowe talks to Hellig.

12 LANCE KING The voice talks to Beck

14 WHATTSO SAYS

Paul O'Neill talks to Van Pelt

16 ALBUM REVIEWS Majestic Vanguard, Saint

Ascension Theory, Sardonyx, Coriolis, Stapp

Divinefire, Flagship, Synnove, Mortification

21 COLUMNS Steve Rowe and Pastor Bob

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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



Remembering Carl Crandell...

I was first contacted by Carl via email about 2 years ago... He had messaged me about a new record label he was starting and described his vision of wanting to have his favorite music (which later getting to know Carl was EVERYTHING) available to all listeners to hear. He wanted to see bands that the normal industry had ignored for years and see them raised to a level of being mainstream artists! To be honest, at first I thought his ideas – while nice – didn't represent reality. But, I was truly honored that he had wanted my project "Fearful Symmetry" as part of his roster.

As time wore on, we quickly became friends. We conversed on the phone and his love of music became more evident with each conversation. He truly loved all the bands he had signed on his label, and was looking to expand even further. The label PsychoAcoustiX was about to enter into an international distribution deal that would propel his bands into the spotlight he had spoken about for 2 years. But that deal was tragically stopped...

Carl Crandell passed away in his sleep on December 6th, 2005. I received the news on a message on my voicemail while entering work. I listened to the message and couldn't believe what I was hearing. I had just met with him personally 5 months prior, and he seemed to be in perfect health. But, after a few phone calls, the news was true that indeed Carl had shed this mortal coil...

What I think I will always remember about Carl is his passion for music. He owned over 7,000 CD's... He knew every obscure group you could throw at him, and he had one of the best commanding radio voices known to mankind. He was not only the owner of the label we were signed to, but he had become a good friend over the past few years. I will always remember him for his love of music, and his commitment to Christ. We will miss him dearly...

—Jimmy P. Brown II - 2006

News bullets

Aletheian guitarist **Alex Kenis** will collaborate with **Becoming the Archetype** to write, record, and tour with the band, as **Jon Star** leaves to pursue his family and career. Alex is NOT leaving the band—Aletheian is still his primary focus. Although this move will put the band on hold, it should also promote Aletheian. As previously planned, **Joe Walmer** will take a brief hiatus from the band as a studio musician for a death metal band on a German record label. **Donny** will use this time to be a recording studio intern in Philadelphia, while **Joel** continues to develop Hope Prevails Productions and new Aletheian merchandise. The band will be writing throughout 2006 with the hopes of hitting the studio again in late fall. Aletheian will perform at Death For Life Fest in April, and Cornerstone 2006.

Alex Thompson of **Bride** (Dale's son) is leaving the band for the Air Force. The band's former drummer will be at least temporarily replaced by drummer/percussionist **Lili Miller** from Brazil. **Troy** and **Dale Thompson** have 30 songs in pre-production and expect to release a new hard rock/metal album in the spring tentatively titled *Against All That Matters*.

Lance Garvin of **Living Sacrifice** has a new band: **Heroes Among Thieves**.

The last **Liberty 'N' Justice** vocalists are unveiled: Mark Slaughter (Slaughter) and Pete Loran (Trixter). They will join: **Ez Gomer** (Jet Circus), Sebastian Bach (Skid Row), Russell Arcara (Surgin/Arcara), **Jamie Rowe** (Guardian), **Dale** and **Troy Thompson** (Bride), Oni Logan (Lynch Mob), Leif Garrett, **Josh Kramer** (Saint), **Scott Wenzel** (Whitecross), Tony Harnell (TNT), Stephen Percy (Ratt), Joe Cerisano (Trans-Siberian Orchestra), Ted Poley (Danger Danger), Phil Naro (Talas/Peter Criss Band), **Mike Lee** (Barren Cross).

Guardian is slated to release a CD on Selectric Records 11/14/6.

Stephen Keech of Denver, CO will sing/scream lead vocals on **Haste The Day's** European tour. If all goes well, he will continue with the band.

The Children of Children is an original rock opera performed by **Madmen and Dreamers** that deals with a family's separation, reconciliation and redemption. The show includes four professional actor/singers and a full live progressive rock band. Tickets are on sale now. For tickets, visit 12mileswest.org, or for info see madmen-and-dreamers.com.

The **Visual Cliff** disc *Freedom Within* sold out of its first pressing (in only 6 months) and the second pressing is now available. The band's first single, "Sacred" has been receiving steady airplay on Sirius Satellite Radio's Revolution channel #67.

Saint is currently recording another new album.



Saviour Machine Interview

In light of the eagerly awaited and much anticipated Saviour Machine Legend III:II project, I had a chance to be blessed with a rare interview with Mr. Clayton. Although, I was not seeking an ordinary interview, but looked at this as a spiritual matter of great importance to our culture as well as to the future of Christianity as a whole. I truly believe that Legend is one of the most important Christian works of our time and as per normal, I know how the enemy works against such endeavors. So that was my main concern in this interview.

Kuba: How has the Spiritual Warfare been during the Legend project?

Eric: Kuba....we could do a FEW interviews on that subject alone! I could write another 5 hour musical trilogy containing the sordid details! ;)

Maybe we should? Hmmm?? But, greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. Right, Eric?

Yes, that's exactly right, man. Despite the barrage of spiritual attacks over the past 10 years, one of the wonderful aspects of being involved in an endeavor like this, is the fact that there are thousands of people praying for us on a daily basis. I have always felt an enormous sense of protection....that is without question!

The gates of Hell will not prevail God's children! But, you say we could do a whole show just on the spiritual warfare aspect of this project, eh?

We will have to get into all of that at a later time....it's extremely complicated as you can imagine, but let me just say that I will tell you some stories! Honestly, at this point I have enough written down to write a nice little book on this subject! ;)

You should..

I "may" just do that!

The Book of Revelation says, "blessed are those that read and hear this book..." Eric, to put this type of project together, has to have been quite a special circumstance, was it not?

Oh yes, in fact it was a truly profound experience upon conception and continues to be a powerful spiritual journey every step of the way.

Ok, my brother, how did the concept of putting the Apocalypse into music, begin? How did this first come to you?

It was and still is the second most powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit I've ever experienced, second only to the night I was saved. In March of 1995, only days after the birth of my first daughter, I flew to Germany to perform what was at that time, the largest single concert event of my career. The pre-production and preparation for the *Live in Deutschland* concert film was intense to say the least... I had not slept more than an hour or two a night for several weeks leading up to the event and, by the time I arrived in Germany after a full day of travel, I had not slept in over 48 hours... By the time I finished performing late that evening, I had gone without a single hour of sleep for over 60 hours! While attempting to remove my makeup a few hours after the concert, I utterly collapsed from exhaustion. Upon hitting the floor, my body went into some sort of feverish convulsion and I was virtually "paralyzed," completely void of strength and unable to get up. Fortunately, I was helped and transported to a bed for some much needed rest...

Stryper has announced 2 festival dates: Sweden Rock Festival on 7/10, and Sonshine Festival in MN 7/16. The Stryper website teases: "...A very special Stryper fan excursion is scheduled to take place in late 2006 and will be announced soon. This will be an amazing event for Stryper fans around the world. It's unlike anything Stryper has ever done. Stay tuned..."

Daize Shayne has just signed a recording contract with BCS/Allegro Records for her debut CD *Live Your Dreams*. The disc will hit the stands 6/24, and her music video "Movin' On" will also be released in June. Mascot/Provogue Records will carry her CD in Europe. Daize will be featured surfing in a National Super Bowl commercial for Net Zero regarding free air time minutes.

Hype is mounting about the **Virgin Black** "work-in-progress." The most recent speculation is a 100-piece choir to compliment their recordings that is reminiscent of the romantic era of classical music composition.

Congratulations to **Rob Rock & Liza**, who are expecting their first child very soon. Rob will travel to Germany in March to record his first live DVD at the Owen Rock-Night Festival. Rob will also perform at the Elements of Rock Festival in Switzerland in April.

Blissed will tour the Northwest USA in late April or May to promote their upcoming recording, *Corrosive*. The band is currently talking with labels about releasing their second CD.

Former **Creed** frontman **Scott Stapp** announced his engagement to **Jaclyn Nesheiwat** with a wedding date of February 10, 2006, in Florida. The couple met at a Muscular Dystrophy Association Gala in New York. Scott's solo album, *The Great Divide*, went platinum. His tour begins 2/23 in FL.

Pastor Bob Beeman of Sanctuary International is selling his home and most of its contents to spend time travelling and teaching. He will build a 2-car garage on his parent's property with an apartment upstairs for himself. Pastor Bob would appreciate continued prayer and support this year.

"Beggars, Rogues & Thieves" has been used on the award winning soap *All My Children* for 3 different episodes, pleasing the **Jeff Scheetz Band**. (Oh boy.)

Kwench's song "Lacking Identity" has been selected by Focus On Jesus Ministries to be used in their sitcom *Persecution Video Series*. Other Kwench songs will follow.

A Mexican Korn website rumored that **Brian "Head" Welch** re-joined the band. This rumor is entirely false according to Head's official website. Brian will release a solo disc in 2006, *Invitations Have Been Sent To All*.

Bands just signed to a label: Endtime Productions just signed **Drottmar**. The band's full-length disc will be released soon, as well as a limited edition 7-inch vinyl. **Global Warning** has signed a deal with ACM Records for new release, *Enemy Within*. Bombworks just picked up **Seven Angels**.

The release date for **Holy Soldier's** DVD has been pushed back to 3/28, since the footage originally edited has been lost. They will seek permission from other *Up From The Ashes* bands for inclusion on this project. The DVD will include personal archives from HS.

METAL TRACKS

Page 6

The following bands are looking for musicians willing to make a serious commitment and relocate:

Ultimatum: Guitarist to locate to NM. Women are welcome to apply. If interested, email Robert at: Ultrametal@msn.com.

Warrior: Drummer, bassist, and vocalist to locate to Houston, TX. Contact by email or at their website iamawarrior.com.

Blushing Well: Drummer wanted to locate to Chambersburg, PA (30 min from MD) as well as financial donations to complete their upcoming release (tentative date late 2/06). See blushingwell.com.

Oops!

Last issue in the **Walk The Sky** review **Rob Bonstin** was erroneously named as the singer of "Touched By You." Correction: **Rick Hunter-Martinez** sang that song.

Cool info from our "brother publication," *HM Magazine*:

2005 Readers' Poll results:

Fav Band: **Demon Hunter**

Fav Guitarist (tie):

Jason Truby (P.O.D.)

Tim McTague (Underoath)

Fav Bassist: **Traa Daniels** (P.O.D.)

Fav Drummer: **Jordan Mancino** (A.I.D.)

Fav Singer: **Ryan Clark** (Demon Hunter)

Fav Song: "**Sincerely, Ichabod**" (Project 86)

Fav New Band: **Becoming the Archetype**

Fav Album Cover: **The Triptych** (DH)

Fav Lyricist: **Andrew Schwab** (Project 86)

Fav Live Band: **Blindside**

Articles in the March/April issue of HM include: **Anam Cara** vs. **Flee The Seen** (where each band interviews the other); new Solid State band, **The Classic Crime**; **Counting The Days**; **The Redemption Song**; **Kingston Falls**; and the "Intermission" article is about Lonnie Frisbee, an integral part of the early Jesus movement (and a lot of the "Jesus rock" that sprouted up as a result), who has been kinda wiped from the history books of this movement due to some controversial elements of his later years.

HM Editor DVP is flying out to Tennessee in early February to be "in the studio" with **The Showdown** for a future major feature on the band (in both publications), chronicling the recording of their sophomore album.

Blood & Ink Records has announced the signing of Amarillo, Texas metallic hardcore outfit **The Gentleman Homicide** to their roster. Formed in early 2003, the band has already made a name for themselves with countless shows and a number of tours regionally and nationally. Most recently, The Gentleman Homicide embarked alongside Ed Gein and Reflux for tour stints. They'll be joining new labelmates **Enlow** and **Burden Of A Day** for the *Blood & Ink Records Tour* in March, with finalized tour dates to be announced shortly. The band is expected to record their debut full length for release later in 2006 as well. In the meantime, demo tracks from the band can be heard via myspace.com/tgh.

Flee The Seen is shooting a video for "Wire Tap Out" in Pittsburgh, PA on Feb. 5 with director Daniel Yourd (Lovedrug, Tokyo Rose). They'll be playing some regional dates in the midwest supporting **Haste The Day**; and then a full US Tour with DeSole (Abacus) including stops at SXSW and Facedown Fest.

Fresh off their tour with incredible tour with **Sinai Beach**, **Nodes of Ranvier** announce the first set of dates from their upcoming tour alongside of Roadrunner's **Still Remains** as well as If Hope Dies and Demiricous.

Seventh Star are heading out in March alongside The Warriors, Blacklisted, and Embrace The End before playing Facedown Fest 2006.

Zao is mixing their new album at Electrical Audio in Chicago with Steve Albini (Nirvana, The Pixies, Melt Banana), who also recorded it (Albini doesn't let people say "produced," because he's only "recording them" in the studio). "The whole experience has been killer for the band," says their publicist. They posted almost daily studio reports (and photos) on myspace.com/zao. The recording process is being documented for a limited edition DVD that will come with the album and feature all new interviews as well. Here's some song titles: "Physician Heal Thyself," "Everything You Love Will Soon Fly Away," "American Sheets On The Deathbed," "Killing Time Until It's Time To Die," "Kingdom Of Thieves," "Pudgy Young Blondes With Lobotomy Eyes," and "A Last Time For Everything."

[nothin' but] News bullets

Kekal is working on a new album, which will take about 7 months to complete. Many of the diverse elements have never been done in metal, but they are undoubtedly Kekal.

Detroit's own **Abandon** is proud to announce the completion of their self-titled CD. The band produced the CD in their studio, Broken Soul. The discs will first be on sale at the band's release party at the Token Lounge in Westland, MI on 2/18.

Proto-Kaw's sophomore album, *The Wait Of Glory*, shows that last year's *Before Became After* wasn't just a one-off project. "I think we were very pleased considering where the band came from, which was out of nowhere," explains legendary Kansas guitarist **Kerry Livgren**. "To complete a project like that and have it turn out the way it did, from my perspective, it was not just a bunch of musicians who came together, it was a bunch of guys who hadn't played, literally, in decades. What I'm trying to accomplish now is for me to do something new. I get from people all the time, 'Why don't you do another 'Dust In the Wind'? Why would I do that? Those songs were what they were and I'd just be imitating myself. So many artists do that. They have one great hit and the rest of their songs imitate that hit. I like to be a moving target (laughs)."

The **Paradoxx** video "Retribution" will be available soon on *Rivet Bat Video*. It was banned in Germany for being "politically incorrect."

Mad Max just signed a deal with Dean Guitars/Blue Guitars.

Recent releases: **The Chariot** *Unsung* EP (includes 20 minutes of live video footage), **Alterra Enigma's** debut CD *Alteration* can be preordered at alterraenigma.com, **Ajalon** *On The Threshold Of Eternity*, **Salem Hill** *Mimi's Magic Moment*, **Jeff Scheetz** *Rock Tricks*, (guitarist instructional CD-rom), **Paradoxx** *Contamination*, **Visual Cliff** *Freedom Within* (2nd pressing), **P.O.D.** *Testify*, **Stryken** *First Strike*. A European release of **Mad Max's** *Night Of White Rock*.

Upcoming releases: A new DVD by **Bride** highlighting the 2005 Brazilian tour, **Seven Angels** *Faceless Man*, **Zao** DVD *The Lesser Lights Of Heaven* a double disc set, **Tourniquet** DVD *Live From Linkoping, Sweden-Bobfest 2005*, **Rivera/Bomma** *I Am God* delayed to March 2006, **Phoenix** *Dying To Find Myself*, **Trinity FSG** *A New Day*, **Akacia** *This Fading Time*. **People In Planes** debut *As Far As The Eye Can See* 3/28, **Frost Like Ashes** *Tophet*.

Crimson Moonlight and **Drottnar** have been invited to play the Cornerstone Festival. Plans have not been finalized yet, but this would be a great double-billing on US soil. Plans are underway to get a few other US dates while they are here.



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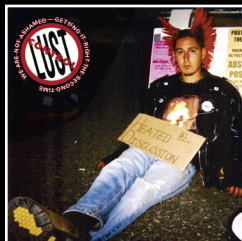
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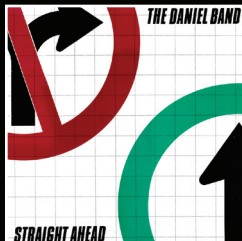
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MORTIFICATION | DISSECTING

INTERVIEW BY ED HELLIG



Steve Rowe is a man on a metal mission. Since his days as a bassist for Lightforce, and as bassist and vocalist for Mortification, Steve has been one of the prominent voices behind 'Jesus Metal', a movement within the scene that exhorts metalheads – and bands alike – to return to the more evangelical roots of Christian metal. His outspoken, no-holds-barred personality has garnered friends and foes alike, and as the band forges ahead through mountains and valleys, Steve seems resilient – although not impervious -- to the criticism. Troubles with his health have slowed him down to the point of making touring difficult and reducing it to a handful of shows a year, but one thing is certain: his precarious health has certainly not silenced him.

I was just watching your Grind Planets DVD and I gotta tell you: some parts are just totally hilarious! When you start poking fun at Stryper's *In the Beginning*... for those of us who got the joke, it's so comical.

"I am excited that people are getting to finally see *Grind Planets* on DVD. A lot of serious work went into the clips and all of us were living on no budget. We were selling well in the US and just starting with Nuclear Blast so those were exciting times. We rehearsed a lot

and you can hear our passion for evangelism and the music. It has been such a blessing working with Adam from Soundmass. Without Soundmass, I don't think I could have continued. My eyesight has become too diminished to work the business end of things and was causing stress and more ill health. Soundmass have started the re-issues with *Scrolls of the Megilloth*, *Horde* and the *Grind Planets* DVD. The Soundmass wholesale and retail distro are awesome and I simply get paid once a month. It has been a timely arrangement since starting it in late '04.

The fact that the humor is self-deprecating just adds to the hilarity of it all. There's one scene in particular that's worth a million bucks: As you prepare to drive away in your tour van, you say, "There's no law against how fast you CAN get to 55", an obvious reference to Robert Sweet's Corvette scene in *In the Beginning*. And then you pull away slowly, and that poor van is just smoking all over the place!

Really, the van on that Australian tour was so bad... we had bad gear, bad conditions, bad everything basically. But it was the apprenticeship that launched the band. Unfortunately, Jayson did not go on with the band, choosing to join Paramaecium, which created new challenges that still exist. Jayson is the best metal drummer in this country and a complete genius. When he needed to be a fool for the camera, he was the best at it as he is with everything he does. I see Mick Carlisle a lot and Jayson and I catch up with on the phone regularly. As for the Stryper references in the video, I am a huge fan of the band, but my personal experiences with the group have not been good. Revolution Metalfest in Mexico just put the nail in that coffin which started in '89 when Lightforce supported Stryper here in Melbourne. That's where I learned how not to treat a support band. Fact is, people cannot help rock stardom and when you reach the dizzy heights of fame and fortune that Stryper did in the 80's, management handles everything. That was the case in '89 and '04. A band at that level is able to focus just on what they need to present on stage. With that said I think seeing the L.A. rock scene first hand and how ugly it all really can be... being from Australia and into more extreme forms of art, I came up with the whole *Grind Planets* idea – as in being the opposite of rock stars. I urged the guys at the time to be as crazy as possible in the documentary parts just to show that we can have fun, laugh at ourselves, makes fools of ourselves (Fools for Christ!), while sleeping on floors and playing in hell holes. Stryper's *In the Beginning* video was the perfect thing to do a spoof of. If you study the Stryper video and then watch *Grind Planets* you will get the jokes.

It's been over a decade since I saw Mortification live in concert. It was 1994 I believe, at a small club outside Chicago called The Thirsty Whale – which, by the way, has been demolished and replaced by a gas station/McDonald's joint. I think Phil Gibson had already replaced Jayson on drums. Tell us some of the good memories from that tour. What were the high and low points?

I guess I could go on and on about the low points from the past 16 years, but the high points are what makes this train keep on traveling. Everything has always been so tight financially, but God has always provided for this ministry. I have a joyful heart, which makes good like a medicine. I find the most extreme and painful situations funny. Sure I voice my opinions strongly, but a true teaser knows

THE GOBLIN

9

how to get a reaction. Sometimes people's reaction to what I have done with Mortification hurts, but God has given me the ability to have a laugh and grow a thick skin. Plus people need to realize that often I am pulling their chain just for fun.

Going farther back, I remember the very first time I heard about Mortification. There was a review of the self-titled album on a prominent magazine at the time called *The Syndicate*, and the reviewer basically ripped the CD to shreds, but not because of the musicianship or the talent, but because he considered death metal (or, as he called, 'grindcore') unfit for Christian metal. I wish I could remember his name, since his efforts obviously backfired and his review only served to peak my interest! Do you still encounter that type of opposition, or are those days long gone?

Mortification has to be the most loved and hated band in the universe. People both Christian and non-Christian either loved or hated this band from day one. The things that the Church doesn't understand are easily labeled wrong, inappropriate, or evil. When you hang around a long time and keep reinventing yourself, people always have something to whine about. But hey, I have grown a thick skin and if I was not around no one would have someone to blame for everything because they are having a bad day.

Many consider *Scrolls of the Megilloth* the band's opus, the highlight of Mortification's career. Some of these same people see the band in a chase to recapture the vibe of that disc ever since. How would you respond to the ever-increasing demand for a record that matches *Scrolls* in brutality and prowess?

The opening track on *Erasing the Goblin*, called "Razor Back" deals specifically with this issue, saying it how it is, but having a 'razor back' to take what comes back at you. It is a ripping death metal track. Every Mortification album has been done for a reason and I enjoy the writing and recording process the most. I like the challenge of reinventing the band. I think that is how we have survived so long. *Scrolls* is what it is and I am so glad it was ahead of its time. It is not just a death/grind album, but has elements of black metal with the screeching vocals and power metal. If you watch *Grind Planets*, you will see the swords and the chalice on "Raise The Chalice," which is a throwback to power metal and done 3 years before *Enslaved* and *Immortal* were doing the sword thing. Death metal bands were not doing screeching vocals at the time and the black metal thing did not hit until '94. With *Post Momentary Affliction*, I wanted to push more thrash and power metal elements back into the band, because if you listen to *Break the Curse 1990*, you will hear my original music vision: German Thrash, like Kreator and Sodom, with the riffing power of Judas Priest and a silly edge like Anthrax and D.R.I. *Post Momentary Affliction* got album of the month in *Rock Hard Magazine*, the major metal mag in Germany in mid '93, so really for me that is our defining moment. Comparisons were made with the breakaway sound

of Pestilence's *Testimony of the Ancients*, as both are albums not following the endless line of copycat death metal acts. I found this most satisfying, because I really dug that Pestilence album when it came out in '91, because it was so different and interesting to listen to. *Bloodworld* was a swing at that more tuned-up extreme sound, but fell flat production-wise. Phil Gibson did a stellar job in '94, not just on the album but also on tour. However, Sherlock is basically an impossible act to follow. Phil Gibson's chaotic style inspired the raw approach to *Primitive Rhythm Machine*, and again there was the sad fact that Mick Carlisle and Phil did not get to record that record due to commitments more important than Mortification. Playing with Lincoln and Keith was a great era and then Adam Zaff coming along before the World Tour in '01, which is the touring highlight for sure... All 3 guys are really into hardcore as was Phil, and being a band and not a solo project, I have always wanted the different members to feel that they can express themselves with the art that is in their hearts. Thus, the slamming I have received for albums recorded in the past ten years. Also the fact that I like thrash, power metal and silly riffs has not pleased some people but I have a lot of fans of that stuff, especially younger kids, so it has not all been bad. Metal Blade signed us for 2 albums and a live one on the strength or lack thereof of *Triumph of Mercy*, so I must have been doing something right because I cannot even remember recording that album, because I was still so ill. Really, that album is the miracle that it states it is and then Metal Blade! It has been a bizarre and unexpected journey. I love all the albums for what they are and who and what they represent: the Lord Jesus Christ and the men who joined their art with mine to make them happen. Now that Mick Jelinic has been around for a while and has produced and engineered *Erasing the Goblin*, we have got right into recording a death/grind-orientated record, because Mick and Damien are so into the more extreme elements of metal, as was Mike who departed a month before recording was due to start early last year. So, the new album is a run back to the early days and although it has taken a huge amount of time to complete is an album the older fans will enjoy. Damien is a machine and so is Mick. I am blown away at the new genius that is Mick Jelinic. He is the best right-hand man I have ever had and what he cannot do cannot be done. His playing on this album and the production and engineering are stellar.

Because of your position as a member and leader of Mortification, you have experienced your share of controversy for things you have said in the press. One of the things that might have put you in hot waters was a statement given in an interview to *The Promethean Crusade* magazine back in 1999, where you declared, "Death metal is dead. I can't think of a single death metal band still active here in Australia." In hindsight, and given the popularity of death metal back then and presently, do you wish you hadn't said it?

I do love death metal music. I think that, like, what happened with

*"But don't think for one moment that you won't be shocked.
All Mortification albums are different and this new one is no exception."*

"If you don't have the message you should do the honorable thing and take the hard road like all secular acts do."

black metal, it just became too many bands doing the same old copycat thing. That is what made death metal die in this country, as has black metal to a large degree. So the dust settles and it is time to try and reinvent those early days. But don't think for one moment that you won't be shocked. All Mortification albums are different and this new one is no exception.

You have also been one of the most prominent bearers of the 'Jesus Metal' flag. In my view, the scene has lost the naiveté of the beginning stages of the movement. Christian metal bands are more accepted by their secular counterparts these days, but is this a result of compromising the message in favor of musical excellence and ambiguous lyrical content? Or is it a matter of maturity, of graduating from 'milk' to 'meat'?

We have always been accepted in the secular market. We did 10 albums with Nuclear Blast (Germany), 3 with Metal Blade (USA) and 4 with Rock Brigade (Brazil). In '94 we supported Napalm Death, Entombed and Sick of It All at the With Full Force Festival in Germany. I had a great chance to talk with those guys – especially Napalm – about The Lord. The black metal explosion made it hard for us, but things seem generally settled back to how they were in the early days. We have generated some real respect from the mainstream metal scene here over the years. We always play with secular bands in Australia. We have sold more than any other metal act from this country. Men who stand for Jesus in their lyrics are the meat of what is going on. Any band that does not have a strong Christian message should not be sold in Christian bookstores or play at Christian Festivals. The world needs Jesus and the Christian fans need encouragement in their faith and walk with Christ. It is too easy to say you're a Christian and get easy sales in the Christian market. In the 80's I toured with bands like Whitecross and saw Scott Wenzel lead heaps of people to faith in Jesus. That is what true Christian metal is all about. If you don't have the message you should do the honorable thing and take the hard road like all secular acts do. Don't scam Christians who think they are buying Christian music and get no food. What has happened to The US "Christian" Rock scene is a disease. Bands like Disciple and Narnia are the meat of the Christian Metal scene. That's just my opinion.

Thankfully, there is a new wave of Christian bands out there that are unabashedly bold about their beliefs, with the chops to boot. Some examples include Becoming the Archetype, Frost Like Ashes, Aletheian, The Horsemen of the Apocalypse, to name a few. And speaking specifically about Becoming the Archetype, they named their debut album Terminate Damnation – which is a killer disc, by the way – and that is a testament of the influence that Mortification still has on the scene. Have you had a chance to talk to those guys?

It is so exciting to see young metal bands coming up – Demon Hunter and Becoming The Archetype, especially. I think the new Becoming the Archetype album is very original and the title being a Mortification song was a thrill to see. I am going to make some time to contact those guys. I am so excited about the work of my new friend Christian Rivel of Narnia/Rivel Records. His music is so much about Jesus and that is where the maturity of the man of God stands – in his ability to stand up in an evil world and say, "I follow Jesus, He is The Only Way and you need Jesus in your life." The selling-out of the Christian message in "Christian" music makes it not Christian and should not be in Christian bookstores or played at Christian festivals.

Now, on to the new album: I understand that planning and pre-production to the album was met with some hurdles.

The devil does not want this album to come out. First, we lost Mike and then it took a lot of demo-ing and reinventing the album with Damien. Months of it! After doing my bass tracks, I ended up in the hospital. On the first day of vocal recording I had to reach deep inside to bring back the roar that once was. That night Mick took me to the hospital out near his country property. When I get soaring temperatures and my body breaks down, I just break out the humor. Mick and I were at the hospital and I was just making endless jokes about everything. I was in some serious pain, but I don't let the devil get me down or stop me. The old *Grind Planets* anointing lives on! Mick was due to finish mastering on January 23rd, but the last two days have been the hottest I can remember. We are in the middle of summer. Yesterday was 46 degrees Celsius, which is about 115 Fahrenheit, I think. Bush fires rage in this country in the heat and Mick had to evacuate his kids to the nearest township. He had the car packed with everything, including unmixed masters of the album, just in case he and his wife had to evacuate as well. I was standing in the center of Melbourne about to go to church at 5:00PM on January 22nd talking with Mick on the phone agreeing that the devil was not going to burn this album or Mick's house, which has the inbuilt 454 Studio. I was not concerned, because I knew that God was with them and Mick is one of those guys who would stand on his roof and fight the fire himself before it took his house. He only just finished building the huge thing early last year. Thankfully, the days have been cooler lately and the wind is blowing the fire away from towns and houses into the bush. We are expecting searing heat again, though. Thus, the release of *Erasing* will now run into March. Please keep us in prayer. The devil just keeps on throwing his weapons, but he cannot kill a vision forged in stone!

Do you plan to release it via Rowe Productions or Soundmass, or are there any talks in progress with possible labels and distributors?

It looks like we have new record and management deals. But nothing is signed just yet. The release is still on schedule. If anything happens against this, I will begin a release on Rowe Productions in February. The new deals are very exciting for the next years of Mortification. It looks like it will all come together in early February.

You have a very close relationship with metal ministries throughout the world, including Alcance Subteraneo in Mexico and Zadoque Community and Projeto Agape in Brazil. What draws your attention to those ministries? Do you see in them the same traits that have been lost in the American and European scenes?

Exousia in Mexico and Antidemon in Brazil are also doing a great work in Jesus Metal Evangelism. They are true warriors of the cross. I wish I had the money to do a premier production of Antidemon and Exousia albums if they were into the idea of working with me in this way. But the battle rages on.

Lastly, the most important question of all: how is your health, and how you're holding up?

My health is not good and money is depleted. But we know one thing is for sure: Jesus wins the war in the end and He already has!



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Lance King

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

We're all familiar with Lance King from his days as the excellent vocalist and leader of the band Balance of Power. Though many of us were saddened when he left the band, Lance has moved on to bigger and better things. Singer, writer, producer and record label owner, Lance took some time from his busy schedule to discuss the past, present and future of his music career.

Chris Beck: You recently sang on a couple albums, *From the Depths of Time* by Avian and *Enter Eternity* by Shining Star. Tell us a little about each album and how you ended up as the lead vocalist on each one.

Lance King: With Shining Star, this was a band that was signed to the same label that Balance Of Power was signed to in Brazil...Frontline Rock (now their doors are closed). This label contacted me shortly after my leaving BOP had hit the streets in early 2003; they asked me if I would like to check

out this other band that they had signed, Shining Star. I asked them to send me some stuff to check out, and I loved the album! We worked out a deal, Shining Star was to be my new main band. After I was finished singing on the album, the label asked me to produce it as well. I went into the studio with long-time friend Todd Fitzgerald, who had mixed the last four Balance Of Power albums. I had Todd do the mix and I wore the producer's hat. When we finished, it sounded excellent. I was excited to get the stuff off and started for the new release. I was told by Frontline that they had sent up the money for the studio fees, but it never seemed to arrive...month in and month out I would write and hear new and creative excuses why the money hadn't arrived. After about six months I needed to pay these fees out of my own pocket, believing in the project. The label apparently had some financial issues, so I held on to the masters and discussed this with the band. So we decided

to sit on the album for a while and see what happened. During that time I was invited to sing on the first Pyramaze album; nothing happened with Frontline, and Pyramaze became my main priority. Avian came up when David Ellefson (Ex-Megadeth bassist) called me about doing a project together. We'd been talking about doing something together for a while, and one day he says, "I've been working on some songs with this guy Yan and it's starting to turn into something, do you want to check it out?" I, of course, said, 'Sure, send it on over,' and that was the beginning of Avian. Yan and David would go into the studio and record the rough rhythm tracks and send them to me and I would add my parts to them and send them back with a rough mix. They both seemed to like my rough mixes, and when we had all the tunes done, David asked me to mix and produce the album. This one I did myself in my Pro-Tools studio at home, but it needed some more players to make

it a rounded sound and production, so I invited my long-time guitar friend Roger Moore from my very first album ever (Gemini – self titled) to do some shredding and Jonah the keyboardist of Pyramaze to give it some depth.

Your singing style on each of these albums is considerably different. Is this something you chose to do in an attempt to “match” the music, or was it perhaps something that was suggested by the other musicians involved?

I believe with each band or project you need to have it be its own thing; if I were to do the exact same thing I do in another album it wouldn't bring anything new to the album I'm working on at the time. I try to fit what I'm doing to what the song is asking for...it's really all about what sounds right in the tune! On a few of the Avian songs Yan had some ideas he wanted me to try. I thought, 'That's great, this album needs to sound different!'

Between Avian and Shining Star, which singing style do you prefer and why?

I would say that Shining Star is closest to my natural singing style. With Avian, I experimented with new voicings. I don't have a personal preference between the two.

One of the other bands you're part of, Pyramaze, has a new album coming out soon, entitled *Legend of the Bone Carver*. What can listeners expect to hear when compared to Pyramaze's first album, *Melancholy Beast*?

This is a concept album by its very nature...it's an epic tale from start to finish. It's darker, heavier, more melodic and more dynamic than our debut album, *Melancholy Beast*.

You spent several years of your career with Balance of Power, with whom you released three albums. Though moving on from the band has certainly allowed you to become involved with other projects and start your own music label, Nightmare Records, do you ever look back and have any regrets about leaving the band?

Absolutely no regrets...I look at my tenure with BOP endearingly. I will always have fond memories of our time together and the great music we made. Change is inevitable sometimes and unfortunately we couldn't work together anymore – some business, and some of it personal. I wish them all the best!

We mentioned your label, Nightmare Records. What were your reasons for starting the label and

have things gone as planned?

This label was started in the beginning as a faux label, it was just something to put on the album art of my first release in 1990 with Gemini's first self-titled independent release. The name Nightmare is actually taken from a song title on that album, a song that at the time I was particularly proud of. The label has exceeded what I had originally planned when I was making my business plan back in 1995.

What are your future plans for Nightmare Records? Are you going to continue to focus on melodic and progressive metal bands?

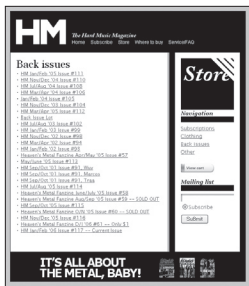
Absolutely, it's the type of music that I know and love!

Do you have any other tour plans in 2006 for Pyramaze or any of the other bands you are involved with?

Pyramaze is scheduled for Prog-Power VI, and other cool festivals this summer. I may do a few shows with Avian in the States and with Shining Star in Brazil, but those have not yet been confirmed.

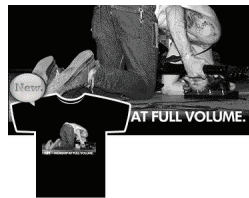
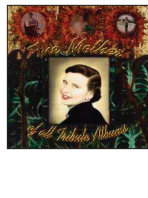
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L-R: Paul O'Neill, Al Pitrelli, Bob Kinkel. Photo by Mark Weiss

What Trans-Siberian Orchestra Says...

I had a wonderful interview with the mastermind behind the holiday touring phenomenon known as Trans-Siberian Orchestra – Paul O'Neill.

Doug Van Pelt: What are some of the biggest rewards you receive from TSO?

Paul O'Neill: Ah, not having to get a real job and wake up in the morning (laughs) – which is my biggest fear in life. Honestly, it's uh... I mean, we've been in the business since the 70s and TSO is basically my idea of the ultimate rock band. It has no limits. It can go anywhere. It has more members than any other band, I think, that's ever existed. And it was basically an amalgamation of all the other bands that I was inspired by. It's the marriage of classical and rock. We've obviously got some bands like Queen and Emerson, Lake and Palmer. The story-telling from, like, Pink Floyd and The Who – you know, adding that third dimension with a rock opera. The multiple lead singer idea I actually got when I saw a Motown show. I think it was The Four Tops and The Temptations.

Really?

Yeah, they were on one bill. And then at the end of the show both bands came out together and they all sang together. And I was thinking, 'Wow! I'd love to have, like, ten lead singers onstage at one time.' And it also

just gave the band the ability to go anywhere musically. We can go from Rhythm and Blues to Symphonic to Hard Rock to Metal to Gospel to Folk Rock, you know, all within the space of one album. The other thing was to try and break the corporate pigeon-holing, which has kind of happened to music. We're the only arts that do that to ourselves. Like a painter paints with every color available... If he paints something in black and white, that's what he wants to do. If you go see a movie, you see a little drama, then you see a little action, then a little comedy, then a romance, then a car chase scene. And you have all these different emotions you play with. Music, for some reason, we've started to really pigeon-hole everybody. It's like, 'This band can only do pop music for prepubescent girls. This one can only do it for heavy metal guys from 14 to 21. This one for adults 21 to 35...' And it's... you'll never see the Boston Symphony kicking into a Reggae song. You'll never see a Reggae group kick into a Strauss waltz. And the industry acts as if people just like one type of thing. When in actuality, human beings by their very nature, love variation. With Trans-Siberian Orchestra, we're able to do that. The negative of the band is it's incredibly expensive to maintain. But the positive about it is basically we can go anywhere and we can do anything to make the music have more impact. Are you aware that the band splits in half in the winter?

Yeah. I had a question about that later on...

Okay, we can attack it now. It was one of those things. When we tour *Beethoven's Last Night* or when we finish *Night Castle*, the new album, those tours can go out and stay out for as long as it takes – 6 months, 9 months, 12 months – it doesn't matter. But one of the founding ideals of TSO is that we would do anything, pay any expense, look under any rock, peek around any corner to make the music have more emotional impact. And we realized, with the holiday rock operas, there was such a demand for them that our agents basically wanted us to start in October something and finish in late January, and it just didn't feel right to us. *It's A Wonderful Life* is a great movie whenever you see it; but if you see it in November, which is a Thanksgiving month, or December, which is a Christmas month, it has a little bit more impact. *Christmas Carol* by Dickens – great story whenever you read it. You read it in June, May, it's still a great story; but if you read it in November, which has the Thanksgiving, the holiday deal or December, it cuts a little bit deeper. So what we decided to do was to split the band in half. 'Cause we have 60 members – 30 core members, 30 revolving members. So, with the band split in half, this way we can cover twice as many cities in November/December. We still have basically 30 band members onstage, which is still 5 times bigger than your average

band. The average group probably has four or five. In the beginning we were really nervous about it, but the bands seem to accept it, and I think that was just because it works. They understand what we're doing and it just played into the way the band was set up – anything the band could imagine, the band could do.

Cool. I saw the 2004 and 2005 shows in Austin, which I loved. I was curious as to why I saw the same traveling group. Was that intentional? Or why is that?

No, it's just the band splits in half and pretty much we let the band figure it out: 'Who wants to go East? Who wants to go West?' And it works out. The band, again, has tons of fire power. The band has 4 lead guitar players, which we kind of stole from, you know, Lynyrd Skynyrd or The Outlaws – bands that had multiple lead guitar players and had these unbelievable guitar duels. I wanted to bring that back into music. You know, the double drummers – from bands like The Doobie Brothers, The Grateful Dead... Basically everybody in the group can sing. So it gives us a lot of power vocally, not to mention all the singers we carry with us, including the background singers.

Cool. I was thinking maybe I'd see the other troupe this time, but it was the same cast of characters.

Yeah, the band basically... You know, everyone kind of gets in the habit of going left/right. Every once in a while, you know, some people swap. Like somebody has family they want to see in a certain city. And they see the band is routed through there and they'll do that. But basically, the band is really tight and everybody gets along. Also, with the amount of talent in the band... I've been in the business for a million years and it's like, usually when bands start to break you have all these ego problems. And with TSO it's been amazing. And that's another thing we wanted to do with the group – we wanted to do some... We've got people in the band who are teenagers, people in their 20s, people in their 30s, people in their 40s. You know, there's people from Asia. You know, Mee Eun Kim comes over every year from Korea. The string player you saw in Austin – Anna (Phoebe) – comes over from England every year. Every kind of group from all over the world, every end... The big divide, which is the generational one, you know, we break with this band. With most bands, people tend to be around the same age, but the mixture we have, it really works out great. You always see the younger members mining the older members for their experience; because you have people like Al Pitrelli, who has seen it all, done it all, been everywhere. But then you have the younger members; and what they add to the group – besides they're all great players – is their enthusiasm. It doesn't allow the band to ever get jaded. Like (starts talking real fast): 'Hey, we're playing Madison Square Garden. It's sold out, blah-la-la-la.' It basically keeps the older guys on their toes and the younger people tending to learn from the old pros. It's a good mixture. Every year, we just tend to take the band higher and higher. Again, it's obvious that we steal a lot of our inspiration for the live show from Pink Floyd. We want to be an arena rock band. Two things bother me about the industry, as far as touring these days: Number one, the prices on these tickets are insane. I've seen shows where the front row is \$1,000 (and) back row is \$200. And even if you only have two kids, that's \$800 before you park the car and buy hot dogs. It's basically making live music unaffordable. And not only the tickets are incredibly expensive, but sometimes you see the shows and you're like, 'Where are they putting the money?' With Trans-Siberian Orchestra, we just pile all the money on the 'flight deck.' Basically, I got that idea from Pink Floyd. Because every time they had an album out I'd see the tour and every time I saw the tour, I'd think, 'Wow. There's no way they can beat this with their next tour!' And every tour they would do it. So, basically, with Trans-Siberian Orchestra, it's 'Fog it, light it, or blow it up. Just keep it interesting.' And just let people, when they walk away from the show, know they got their money's worth.

Which songs and/or acted out parts are your favorites from the current show? Why?

Oh, god! I don't think there's any such thing as favorites. Songs are like children. You love them all. Sometimes, depending on the mood you're in, certain ones are more appropriate than others. Honestly, it's like they all work well when they're all put together. I think the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. You know, because I love the old city bar thing. You know, where the guy comes out dressed like a bum, which we kind of got the idea from Genesis and Peter Gabriel in their very early days. Of course, I love the place where the pyro's going insane and the band's having massive guitar duels. And I also love the storytelling. Honestly, it's like saying, 'Which part of television do you like better? Do you like sound or do you like the visual?' It's like, 'You've gotta have 'em both.' With Trans-Siberian Orchestra, basically,

we want to have it all. And we also want people to be able to grow with the record. *Lost Christmas Eve* is another perfect example. I'm probably dating myself here. But, like, when I was a kid growing up, which is way before you, vinyl was the thing. You'd get this 12-inch by 12-inch work of art. You'd open it up. You'd have, like, this huge centerfold and booklets and 8 x 10's and all kinds of posters and stuff like that. And CDs have gotten smaller and smaller and smaller and you've got less and less. The booklets tend to be 8 pages. Maybe 12, max. Like, the latest TSO album was 50 pages, which obviously wouldn't fit into a jewelbox and – God bless 'em – Atlantic did a special run for us. But I think it's paid off, because at the beginning of any TSO album there's the story, which you can just read as a short story. And then it retells the entire story in poetry, so that you can read it as you're following the songs. The reason we decided to do it over in poetry is that poetry can take on an angle that prose can't. How do I explain this? Okay, you know the song "Christmas Nights In Blue" from *Lost Christmas Eve*, where the father's basically coming home and he walks past the bar? And he ends up going into the bar. Now, when you describe the bar in prose, you describe the bricks, you describe the mortar and, you know, the fact that anybody that tends to be in a bar this late on Christmas Eve, you know, tends to be a little bit lonely. You can do that in prose and you can do that directly; but then when you re-tell it in poetry, you can really capture more of the soul of the building. Like, instead of describing the bricks and mortar and the windows, whatever, the poetry goes: "Here the tragically beautiful and the beautifully tragic drift through this night in a last quest for magic. Their faces are masks and so artfully disguised the wounds in their hearts, the scars in their eyes. Now, these scars in their eyes never hurt, never bleed, but like cracks in a mirror, they distort all they see. For when the heart's an open wound, its greatest threat I fear is that the salt rubbed into it does come from one's own tears." And then it just goes into "Christmas Nights In Blue." And the other thing I like about poetry is it's not prose but it's not lyrics, because it lacks the melody, but it does have a meter to it and a rhyming rhythm, so it's like right in-between lyrics and straight literature. Again, it just gives another facet for people to get into the album. Just when you think you've discovered everything hidden in the record, something else pops out. The other thing I love is you're reading the story and, after you go through the first 25 pages you hit the centerfold and again Atlantic did a special run. We said, "We need the CD booklet to be wider than the normal CD booklet." And they basically rolled their eyes and approved it. But then the drawing that Greg Hildebrandt did... I said, "I need a little kid sitting on top of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue looking down at the Fifth Avenue after a snowfall, but I don't need Rockefeller Center there. What I need is the hotel that used to be there." And a couple days later this painting arrives. And the Hildebrandt's are just geniuses. I mean, anything you can describe they can bring to life.

Wow.

Do you play, by the way, Doug?

No. I've been doing the music magazine for twenty-plus years. I've got a guitar and...

Did you always want to be a journalist? Was that...

No, it kind of happened. I just kind of... My last two years in college I kind of discovered it.

It's funny, because I always wanted to be like a writer or a journalist or a writer going into music and books. I think the thing that maybe held me back from journalism was deadlines. It's like... I read magazines and newspapers and sometimes I read this unbelievably great writing and I'm thinking, 'Wow! These guys did this overnight, because this just happened yesterday and they're writing about it today and it's unbelievably great!' You know, *The Lost Christmas Eve* was three years late by the time we turned it in. *Night Castle* is, like, two years late already. And we're really, really bad with deadlines. We went in that direction, but I love journalism. It's just the fact that when your editor says, 'It has to be in tomorrow,' it actually really does have to be in tomorrow.' But with TSO, basically, we'd rather be late and great. Since we're a little bit slower, the labels basically just put up with us.

Thank God they do. That's pretty cool.

Yeah. I'd have to say Atlantic did old-fashioned artist development with Trans-Siberian. Because, when we first told them the idea... I had spoken to Jason (Flom). I was like...because they had asked me if I wanted to start my own group – because I had been producing and writing for bands for many years – and I said, "Okay, but if I do, I want a full rock band with a full orchestra with multiple lead singers with multiple

ALBUM REVIEWS



MAJESTIC VANGUARD BEYOND THE MOON

According to *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, "vanguard" is "the soldiers who march at the front of an army," or "the forefront of a movement." Appropriately named, Majestic Vanguard worships and praises the Lord throughout the CD. The music ranges from acoustic flavors to melodic metal, the band fits with vocalist Peter's voice perfectly, and the lyrics are inviting, making MV a force to be reckoned with. Unlike many bands who have a hard time defining themselves the first time around, Majestic Vanguard will have the unique challenge of trying to top this one. No surprise, then, that the band was "picked up" by the first label they contacted, Rivel Records. Christian Rivel signed them almost immediately after receiving the band's demo. [Rivel] Diane L. Crider



DARKFIELD ILLUMINATOR GLIMMER

With influences like NIN and Marilyn Manson, I'm automatically and eagerly listening... With abrasive and metallic interludes, samples, loops and guitars, the thermostat is definitely set on "aggression." Hooks and vocals are not up to par with its influences, but tunes like "Aversion" and "Kiss" (featured on the March/April HM issue's *Hard Music Sampler* CD) are pleasant slaps upside the head. [Indie] DVP



ASCENSION THEORY ANSWERS

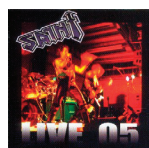
Answers is an album of skillful progressive metal with a positive message. Fans of Dream Theater will really like this album, though the music has less of the self-absorbed noodling and isn't quite as heavy as the kings of progressive metal. The two songs with the female vocals detract from what is otherwise a strong vocal performance by Leon Ozug. I'm usually a sucker for a pretty voice, but her singing just doesn't match well with the music. The standout

track is the peaceful and introspective "To Be Content." With *Answers*, there is no question that Nightmare has given us yet more quality metal. [Nightmare] Chris Beck



SARDONYX LINEAR PROGRESSION

The music is big and the message bold. Sardonyx proves once again that you can combine worship lyrics and heavy metal without being cheesy. The focus isn't entirely on the words, however; this is classic metal that is done quite well. The production is a bit raw, but is still very good for a self-produced album. Listening to *Linear Progression* is an uplifting experience, but with only four songs, it's over too soon. To get this CD, send a donation to Lightshine Ministries. [Lightshine] Chris Beck



SAINT LIVE 05

With thirteen tracks of guitar-laden heavy metal, on *Live 05*, classics such as "The Path" and "In The Night" sound just as good as they did many years ago. Josh Kramer strains to hit a few notes and at times is hard to hear, as is the crowd noise, which is either good or bad depending on how "live" you prefer a live album to sound. Overall, the production is solid. With a good mix of old and new songs, fans of these Christian metal legends will really enjoy this album. [Armor] Chris Beck



FLAGSHIP MAIDEN VOYAGE

Flagship drifts back to a time when Queen, Styx, and Kansas were the rage. The mesmerizing artwork on the cover and insert represent the band's progressive and symphonic rock accurately—reflecting drifting waves. The only downfall to this theme is that the lyrics were purposely printed to be fading in and out, which makes them somewhat hard to read. "Heart Is the Center" is the most musically

diverse of the 6 songs, which weigh in at a minimum of 7 minutes each. The heart of Flagship is Christian Rivel and Linus Kase, with supportive musicianship by: Carl Johan Grimmark, Kristofer Eng, Per Hallman, and Mick Nordstrom. Kerry Livgren (AD, Kansas) who wrote "Ground Zero (*Seeds Of Change*)" performs the guitar solo on this track, while Per Hallman and Christian Rivel share lead vocals. [Rivel] Diane L. Crider



CORIOLIS S/T

Coriolis plays a mixture of techno and rock\metal, that fans of *Assimilation*-era Deliverance would enjoy. This is minimalistic music, which is not the greatest quality, but it is at least on par with most releases, and above par for PsychoAcoustix Records. [PsychoAcoustix] Daniel Jesse



MISSION OF ONE SHOW ME THE WAY

Best described as a mix of biker rock and classic 80's metal bands like Saint and Tempest, *Show Me The Way* is a difficult album to review. The production is passable, yet it's below average when compared to most other current releases. The lyrics are evangelical, but at times they cross the line and sound preachy. The singing is okay, but there is an unintentional and annoying distortion of the vocals. The music isn't bad, though. The rhythm guitars are crunchy and the leads are frequent. Scott Wenzel appears on 3 tracks, though his singing is harsher than what Whitecross fans are used to. With a good producer and additional focus on the lyrics, *Show Me The Way* could have been a lot better. [Indie] Chris Beck



DIVINEFIRE HERO

Fans of unpredictable melodies and intermeshed styles will love this dramatic disc. Symphony meets power metal in a beautiful layering of speed gui-

tars, clear vocals, and haunting keys. While melodic vocals are dominant, they are accented with growling. "Hero" is lyrically refreshing in a world where men are increasingly encouraged to water down their faith to prove their manhood. "United As One" transitions from a beautiful ballad to hard rock effectively. "The Show Must Go On" is a wonderful remake of the Queen classic with a whole new meaning. Lyrically diverse, the songs range from spiritual "milk" to prayers and praise. [Rivel] Diane L. Crider



LAWRENCE BISHOP II TWO SHADES OF BLUE

Here's some great Blues and Southern Rock, at times sounding like Montrose/Gamma and at others Bob Seger. Quality production, but best of all, it's got real soul. Just in case you didn't recognize the name, Lawrence is a rodeo bull-riding musician that plays bass for Bride. This is seriously delicious stuff. [Indie] DVP



CONSUMPTION OUT OF THE ASHES

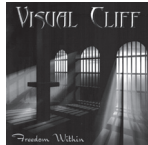
Some medieval, Celtic-influenced rock for ya, with acoustic guitar accompaniment by a guy named Scott Saxon, for crying out loud! Bassist Gina Turner's vocals are solid, but slightly annoying style-wise. Imagine Geddy Lee singing ballads... She sounds a little better here with faster tempo tunes, like "Lights Out." [Indie] DVP



FINAL AXE BLADES OF BLOOD

While the slower, power metal tempo sometimes bores me, the drumming of guest Robert Sweet, these great guitar tones, and the best vocals I've heard from Simon Tyler (fka Keith Miles) make this an interesting album. Those of you who remember Final Axe (who go all the way back to the late 80s) will be glad to know that this is easily their best album. If

Saint were to win "Comeback of the Year" for 2004's *In The Battle*, then *Blades of Blood* would win it this year. [Retroactive] DVP



VISUAL CLIFF FREEDOM WITHIN

Rob Perez and friends jump out of the gate with a big metal hook in "Sacred." Solid rhythm chops and tasteful/inventive leads and fills make this a melodic yet progressive (half vocal/half instrumental) musical journey that should appeal to discriminating fans and musicians. When compared to the great metal of history, it's somehow demo quality and average, but that's pretty good, considering some of the crap that's still churned out from garages today. These guys can play, write and improve. [Trinity] DVP



SYNNOVE S/T

With gothic and heavy guitar sounds, Synnove balances out their black metal assault with lots of musicality and swinging dynamics. Band members Brad (guitar), Jim (keys) and Stephanie (bass) all share in vocal duties, giving the overall sound spectrum some diversity. It's done quite tastefully. Steve the drummer, while not heard from vocally, is certainly one of the key elements, laying down some solid and well engineered drumming. Musically, they're a nice accompaniment to a CD collection that includes Virgin Black and Antestor. Thematically, the name Synnove has an interesting origin, being the name of a 10th century Irish princess. Essential track you must hear: "The Long Kiss Goodbye." [Soundmass] DVP



SCOTT STAPP THE GREAT DIVIDE

If you were slightly disappointed with Alter Bridge's debut and missed the "Creed sound," then you'll be happy to know that *The Great Divide* fits right

up musically as a sequel to *Weathered*. Lyrically, this guy that a lot of Christians used to wonder about (with songs like "My Own Prison" spelling a lot of faith issues out) is now openly making it pretty clear that his worldview is Christian. This album's themes rotate between anger and forgiveness. [Wind-Up] DVP



MORTIFICATION

GRIND PLANETS (DVD)

Re-issues are hard to review. Unless the product at hand offers something notably new, in most instances you are faced with the dilemma of offering objective criticism to something that is, by all intents and purposes, dated. This is the case with the Soundmass re-issue of Mortification's *Grind Planets*, a collection of eight video clips produced by the band around 1991-1992 during the *Mortification* and *Scrolls of the Megilloth* era. While showcasing a DIY vibe that was characteristic of the band back in the day, it falls flat in comparison to the material being released nowadays in terms of video quality. Every one of the eight clips was shot using TV-quality videotape and present the same basic premise: shots of the band playing the song with different thematic scenes sprinkled here and there. Completists might be able to find something they like here, however. Some of the humorous behind-the-scenes stuff – including a couple of hilarious spoofs of Stryper's *In the Beginning* documentary – are candid and self-deprecating. The bonus footage of their 1992 show at Melbourne's The Arthouse is done from a single stationary camcorder and the sound is just simply horrid. Missing are some of their videos shot on film and professionally produced, like "Scrolls of the Megilloth." Overall, a decent DVD, but one that leaves much to be desired. [Soundmass] Ed Hellig

Saviour Machine cont'd

That night, I experienced the most intense "dream" I'd ever had and through the course of that dream, I was given what I believe to be a "vision" for this project. From the inception of SM, I had always felt an immense "calling" for Ministry through music and I always believed that it was a focused vision; but until that very night, I had never seen it so clearly... It was SPOKEN and SHOWN to me! I know it sounds a bit "charismatic," but it is the truth and it was what it was! ;)

I am going to start Praising God in the Spirit right now, because I knew that this had to be born from a rhema Word from God! So, how did you begin to follow this monstrous task?

The next morning, I was diagnosed with severe pneumonia and was forced to remain confined to a bed for the next 10 days or so... I continued to have the same dream... it was recurring, day after day, night after night... it became more detailed, less surreal and immensely vivid! When I recovered and was healthy again, I returned home to America and began the initial "building blocks" for this project.

No small task, to say the least.. How long before you began?

I had been fascinated with Bible Prophecy since I was a child, and over several years, I had obtained and read many books on the subject. My studies or research of Eschatology had always been a bit of a "hobby..." I never imagined that they would turn into the entire focus of my work as an artist. I spent the next year or so just "gathering," diagramming and breaking it all down in a somewhat mathematical sense... The walls of my office became "littered" with numeric graphs, timelines and charts pertaining to the Book of Revelation and the events described therein... I formed a massive and meticulously detailed concordance of Apocalyptic Scripture, which covered the remaining wall space... In the end, it was hundreds of photo copied pages of the Bible, lining the walls of my workspace like some sort of "crazy" wallpaper! ;)

So, it took you a year to write *Legend I*?

No... it took a year to PREPARE to write *Legend Part I*... as well as the guidelines and structure for *Legend Part II* and *Part III*... the whole Trilogy had to be "designed" or at least "laid out" before one word was written or a single note composed!

Whoa! That is amazing! Well, it truly is a special work, the music of *Legend* is comparable of Pink Floyd, Genesis, and The Beatles, also to the works of Mendelson, Handel and Bach, the artwork inside

the CD's are compelling, even the cases are something special. Truly, this is a future religious relic to behold and already is a treasure.

Thank you Kuba... you are FAR too kind and I'm "honored" by your sentiment... I have a question for you? I have given you an open door to ask anything you want and you haven't asked me a single question regarding *Legend Part III:II*? I'm shocked! ;)

No... I figure that you'll be done when you're done.
God bless you, my friend! ;)

Don't let anyone rush you! Not fans, not media, not even the label! This work is to the Glory unto God! That is why He used such a workaholic/perfectionist like you to get it done?? Do what you do best, Eric. Get it done as perfect as you can, bro!

Thank you! Is there anything else you would like to ask about *Legend Part III:II*?

So, how do you feel about the *Legend III:II* recording right now, is it going well?

Well... As you may have heard, I'm a bit of a "perfectionist" and I'm not satisfied easily... of course, "perfection" is a relative term... but in regards to this production, it is by far the closest thing to "perfection" that I've ever been involved with as an artist...

Brother, I love you very much in the Lord for being faithful to your calling. We will see you in January and talk more then.

Thank YOU, likewise...and we'll talk soon...

As we eagerly await the release of this Epic, let us not forget to continue to pray for those involved in this masterpiece and for God to prepare the hearts of those who are sure to be touched by this piece. It will reach many for Christ in the future as it has already! As a matter of fact, I truly believe that this work, has not even begun scratching the surface of the total impact that it will make in the coming years, perhaps even in centuries to come.

That is why, this work needs to take however long it takes to get completed to the Glory of God.

Are there any other projects that you are currently working on?

I've got two full album side projects that I'm scheduled to do early this year, and a few albums I'll be lending my voice to for a song or two, that will remain under wraps for now! And I'll be working on the new Avian album as well!

Any last words for the readers of Heaven's Metal?

I thank you for taking the time to read this entire interview. I hope you found it interesting! Stay tuned to this young magazine because it's one of the coolest in existence!





Trans-Siberian Orchestra cont'd:

lead guitars." They basically said, "How much do you need?" They wrote a blank check and said, "Send us a postcard when you're done." Then we just lucked out that the first album took off.

Yeah, it's really struck a chord.

Yeah, it did. It kind of scared us all. We all kind of hoped... You always hope it'll work. You always think it'll work, but we never expected to get as big as it's gotten. It's scary. I think we did, like, around three-quarters of a million tickets in seven weeks, which is a lot of tickets in seven weeks.

I'm going to jump to a question that's related to that: If you knew the success you were going to have with TSO, what would you possibly have done different if you had to do it all over again?

Oh boy. I really don't think I would do anything different – except mistakes where I wasted tons of money I wouldn't have done. Again, it's been one thing with TSO. Sometimes we'll spend \$100,000 recording a track and then we'll realize that the singer could sing it much better if you changed the key by half a step. And, it's like maybe one half of one percent better, but we threw that whole track in the garbage and re-recorded it to get that one half of one percent. Obviously, we would have recorded it in the right key if I had known! Some things you'll just learn as you actually put the band down to tracks.

Yeah. And...

Do you think Christmas is a divisive holiday?

Um, I love Christmas. I embrace the divisiveness. But I think, uh...

Where do you see the divisiveness? I'm just curious, because it'll help me to answer the question, Doug.

Okay. One of my questions was, "What do you think about the claim of Christ to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me?" That's very exclusive, very divisive.

First of all, you can argue what somebody means with etc, etc. Um, and it's... People also take down people's words. It's like to me it just gets down to this: You know, it's not how you wear your hair. It's not what building you go into. It's not what you eat. It's not, you know, what holidays you observe. I think one of two things is true: There's one God Who made everybody; and I think the only thing He wants us to do is keep an eye out for each other. And I think Christ said that. There's also various religions. I'm sure... I don't know if you've read all the books of all the religions, but I have. I actually had this question asked of me once in Egypt. They asked me like, you know, "Are you a Christian?" I was born Irish Catholic, which, depending on... I'm not a practicing one. I don't go to church everyday or anything like that. But what I basically said was, "Someone said to Christ, 'Skip all the rhetoric. What does it all come down to?' He said, 'Do unto others what you would

someone could misuse them. Which is... I don't think we have any choice but to keep moving ahead and trying to figure this whole thing out.

Well put. What are your thoughts on Jesus Christ?

Um, it's, God. That would take hours for us to dig into. It really would. Do I think the world is a better place because of Him? Absolutely.

You've touched on this before, and I'd like you to elaborate about how much time you spent developing the storylines...

The stories are basically born instantly. Then it takes an hour to write it down and then probably a couple weeks to get the verses and the choruses for the main songs moving the story ahead. And then, after that, the longest thing is the execution of getting it recorded.

What sneak peek information would you like to give us about the next album?

Um... God! I've learned every single time I try to, like, make predictions about the records, everything changes. Originally, *Night Castle* was not supposed to be a rock opera. It was supposed to be a straight-ahead album, but that has changed and it is now a rock opera. And, by the way, the reason we do rock operas is basically, with a rock band, we always try to write the lyrics so that they're so strong they would stand up as just poetry and they don't even need a melody. You know, you would buy them as just a poetry book. We tried to

"...Do I think the world is a better place because of Him? Absolutely..."

Well, hey, for a musical event that takes place in the peaceful holiday season, why did you choose a religion that is so divisive as Christianity?

Hmmm. Slanted question. I don't think Christianity is divisive in that, um, you know, I think Christ just said it very simply when He said, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' That's what the whole thing comes down to. Now, does everybody do that? Obviously not. I think men – people – tend to be divisive. I don't think, that thing... Also, we don't think of ourselves as a religious group. The fact that we want everyone to kind of get along is something that I think everybody has in common. The band has touched on those things before. Like, are you familiar with *Savatage*, by the way, Doug?

Yeah.

Like *Dead Winter Dead*, you know, is about the war between...that was going on in Bosnia. And, um, I think we've... Religion in general is a good thing. I think evil men use it for bad purposes. It's like, sometimes evil will hide behind nationalism. Sometimes it'll hide class. Sometimes it'll hide behind religion. It always has nice words, but eventually it will have to show its hand, because you can judge evil by what it does. Which is basically kind of what TSO is about. It's... With the arts come incredible responsibility, too. How do I explain this? By the way, why did you phrase that question that way, if you don't mind my asking? Is there something you found Christian about it or something?

Uh, well yeah! Very much so.

Oh, Christmas, I suppose?

have others do unto you.' And then when they tried to catch Him with those tricks, you know, like, 'What about the Roman government?' He's like, 'Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Give unto God the things that are God's.' Basically, I said that if I followed a religion that said, 'You can only eat this. You have to do this on these days and you're allowed to kill people that don't agree with you.' And then I died and found out that that religion had nothing to do with God, I would say, 'Wow, I really screwed up.' Now, I'm by no means anything to hold up as an example to follow, but basically by following that thing that Jesus said, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,' always kind of look out for the other guy, turn the other cheek, etc... if I died tomorrow and found out that Christ had absolutely nothing to do with God, I would think that... I would still not regret what I had done, because I think it makes me a better person than what I am now or who I am now. The scary thing is: Is the world bad with religion? Yes. Do I think it would be a worse place without religion? Yes. Will evil men twist words and try to use religions to their own intentions as time goes by? Probably yes, because they've done so in the past. But it doesn't mean that we should give up on it. Just because someone gets in a car and gets drunk and kills some people doesn't mean we should stop making cars. I don't think the problem's religion, per se. As it is just human beings using... People using words, using organizations for things that they weren't intended to. Did Wilbur and Orville Wright intend for mass bombings to come out of inventing the airplane? I don't think so. But was it used for that? Yes. And any movements forward with mankind always hold the possibility that

write the melodies so that they're so infectious that it doesn't need a lyric. It would stand up on a music box all by itself. When you put the two of them together, they create an alloy, where when you hear the melody, you can't imagine it without the lyrics and when you hear the lyrics you can't imagine them without the melody. Again, one of those cases where the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. And once you've done that to the best of your ability, we were always looking for a way, to find an angle to make it cut deeper. And we basically realized that the way to do this was through the rock opera. Like, "Pinball Wizard" from *The Who* is a great song all by itself, but when you realize it's about this kid who can't see, can't feel, can't hear, it cuts ten times deeper. *Jesus Christ Superstar*. "I Don't Know How To Love Him" – I don't know if you're familiar with the song – was a huge hit at radio as just a love ballad. But then when you realize it's Mary Magdalene singing to Jesus, it takes on a whole 'nother angle. A perfect example is "Sarajevo 12/24." I think the song holds up just as an instrumental if you hear it on the radio. But when you realize the story behind it... then you realize that the orchestra represents the Muslims and the rock band represents the Serbs. The lone cello represents that single individual that's trying to get between the two warring factions.





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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

DEATH METAL?

Just stating those two words makes many people look at you in horror. Most people have never heard the term even in "the world," so no wonder the church immediately labels Death Metal music as being evil. I once spoke to someone about black metal and they thought it must be music played by Aborigines or African Americans!? When mentioning Death Metal they straight-out said, "Satan's music!" Extreme forms of music/art are often misunderstood, because people have preconceived ideas about what can possibly be Sacred music or not. We need to remember that the devil did not create anything. Not even extreme forms of music/art. All Satan ever does is pervert God's creation. Actually, the depravity in the lives of many famous classical composers shows that their art came from evil hearts. Just like many of today's rock and pop musicians.

Extreme music artists who are truly born again can only present their music from a heart of love for God. Not just a love for God, but a holy fear of God and understanding of the work of the devil in destroying lives through all styles of music. I truly believe that you become what you feed your ears and eyes on.

When people meet me they usually can't believe that I play the sacred style of music that I do. When they see and hear of the fruits of the Mortification ministry they are amazed that such a ministry even exists.

The name Mortification was taken from an eighteenth century theological book with chapter headings such as: "The Mortification of the believer" and "The need for Mortification." The book is based on the King James version of Romans 8 V13 and Colossians 3 V5. In a nutshell: "Mortify the deeds of the flesh." Look up "Mortification" on the net and you will mainly find theological references.



There is a sick and dying world out there on its way to hell. I am so happy to be part of an extreme Christian music culture that still holds fast to the truth of salvation through Jesus, when the majority of "Christian" rock acts have sold out to little or no Jesus message. Let all who play Christian Metal stand strong together as people who present powerful music with the most powerful message of salvation.

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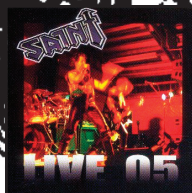
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SOUND ADVICE

By Pastor Bob

I have always been intrigued by the life of Paul, the Apostle. His transformation from a man devoted to the destruction of Christianity to a fighter for the cause of Christ is amazing. It is easy to simply state that Paul was "Transformed," but what does that really mean?

Paul went from an uninformed Scholar to a man of Faith. HE HAD THE TRUTH IN HIS HANDS THE WHOLE TIME. He had studied the Bible his whole life. But he had never met God.

You probably know the story well. Paul, after all, wrote most of the New Testament. But there is a central passage I'd like to share with you today. It seems to give us the biggest glimpse into the very heart of the Apostle:

Yet I am not ashamed, because I know Whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

Paul spoke boldly of his faith. It was not just some pie-in-the-sky ideology to him, but a living, vibrant experience.

"I know Whom I have believed ..."

If Paul were alive today, I am sure many people would have a problem with his proclamation. Many would call him "narrow-minded." It seems a more popular stand in our current society is to make uncertainty a virtue, as we seek not to offend anyone. But Paul boldly says, "I KNOW." It is his statement of Faith.

The Philippian jailer asked Paul what he should do to be saved. Paul's

answer was simply "BELIEVE." He didn't tell him to join a group or work hard for it, or even reform. Paul knew the key was Faith. Faith in a person – Jesus Christ. A personal faith in a personal Christ.

"... and am convinced that He is able ..."

Paul staked his life on the fact that God was able. He was convinced.

There are two things that will convince you today: The Word of God, and your own personal experience. You see, Paul had the Word all along. But he had never discovered God's heart in it. He had never experienced the depth of His love.

"... to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day."

Trust is the bottom line. In a day when we don't seem to trust anyone, this becomes a difficult concept. How do you trust someone so fully that you give them everything that is dear to you? It doesn't happen overnight. It didn't happen to Paul quickly, either. But the more he believed (relied on Him, trusted in Him, cling to Him – per original Greek), the more he realized God was trustworthy. He knew it was in good hands if it was in God's hands!

God has entrusted you with something as well. He has given you his Word, the Bible. It is not just to be used for evangelism. It is to be used for personal transformation. Spend some time today in the first chapter of 2 Timothy, as Paul encourages Timothy in his faith. This is a wonderful example of the possibilities for your own life as well!

In these evil times we will rise!

Royal Anguish



Tales of Sullen Eyes

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Royal Anguish (USA)
Eluveitie (CH) & Taketh (S)

May 12, Alphen a/d Rijn (NL)
May 13, Ede (NL)
May 14, Zwolle (NL)
May 26, Stuttgart (D)
May 27, Chemnitz (D)
May 28, Aarau (CH)

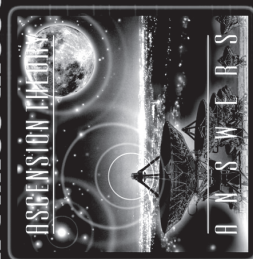
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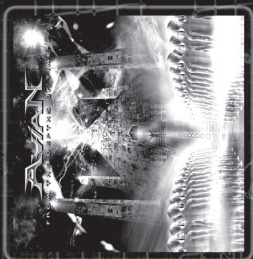
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ASCENSION THEORY
Answers



PYRAMAZE
Legend of the Bone Carver



AVIAN
From the Depths of Time



SHINING STAR
Enter Eternity



WARMACHINE
The Beginning of the End

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*"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord
and He shall lift you up."*

James 4:10